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22 November 1981

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4BY JON TISDALL

MERANO, ITALY, NOV 22, REUTER -- VIKTOR KORCHNOI, THE SOVIET DEFECTOR WHO FAILED TO WIN THE WORLD CHESS TITLE, SAID TODAY THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) HAD OFFERED TO HELP HIM BEFORE HIS MATCH WITH RUSSIAN ANATOLY KARPOV.

HE DID NOT SAY HOW THE CIA OFFERED ITS HELP OR HOW HE HAD APPROACHED.

"BEFORE THE MATCH I WAS OFFERED THE SERVICES OF THE CIA...IF I HAD TO PLAY HIM (KARPOV) AGAIN I WOULD APPLY FOR THEIR SERVICES," KORCHNOI TOLD REUTERS.

KORCHNOI LOST TO THE SOVIET CHAMPION LAST FRIDAY AFTER A SEVEN-WEEK WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DUEL IN MERANO.

THE 50-YEAR-OLD CHALLENGER, WHO DEFECTED FROM THE SOVIET UNION IN 1976, CRITICIZED HIS PLAY IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP AND SAID HE PLANNED TO PRESS HIS CAMPAIGN FOR HIS WIFE AND SON, STILL IN THE SOVIET UNION, TO BE ALLOWED TO JOIN HIM IN THE WEST.

HE ACCUSED KARPOV, 30, OF BEHAVING LIKE A SCHOOLBOY DURING THEIR 10 WORLD TITLE GAMES. "HE IS LIKE A PUPIL WHO TRIES TO CAUSE TROUBLE WHEN TEACHER ISN'T LOOKING," KORCHNOI SAID.

KARPOV SAID AT A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY THAT HIS OPPONENT WAS PRONE TO "FILTHY BEHAVIOR" DURING MATCHES.

THE TWO RIVALS, ONE AN EXILE IN DISGRACE IN THE SOVIET UNION, THE OTHER A SOVIET HERO, DISLIKE EACH OTHER PROFOUNDLY. THEIR PREVIOUS TITLE MATCH IN THE PHILIPPINES THREE YEARS AGO -- WITH KARPOV THE VICTOR -- WAS ESPECIALLY VITRIOLIC.

KORCHNOI, WHO WAS SMOKING HEAVILY AGAIN AFTER KICKING THE HABIT WHILE THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN MERANO WAS BEING PLAYED, SAID HE PLANNED TO MEET U.S. POLITICIANS TO BRING PRESSURE ON MOSCOW TO ALLOW HIS WIFE BELLA AND SON IGOR, WHO HE SAYS ARE IN A LABOR CAMP, TO EMIGRATE AND JOIN HIM IN SWITZERLAND.

HE SAID HE ALSO WANTED THE WORLD'S CHESS GRANDMASTERS TO HELP HIM BREAK WHAT HE CALLED THE BOYCOTT AGAINST HIM BY SOVIET PLAYERS. THEY REFUSE TO MEET HIM EXCEPT IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES.